



Rita Buhr

December 31, 1941 - March 19, 2019

Rita Marie Layden Buhr died on March 19, 2019 of natural causes. The second of five children born to John and June Layden, Rita was 77 years old.

Born on Dec. 31, 1941, in Hartshorne, OK. Rita grew up in Oklahoma and Indiana. She graduated from Rensselaer High School in Rensselaer, IN, in 1959. She attended St. Joseph's College for two years before transferring to Purdue University, where she earned her B.A. degree in psychology in 1963 and her M.A. degree in English literature in 1965.

Rita spent the late 1960s in Vista (Volunteers in Service to America), working in the impoverished coastal regions of South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama. She moved to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1970 and spent 10 years in San Jose, Calif. She worked much of that time with the San Jose Police Department in their crime prevention unit.

When her father took ill in 1980, Rita moved to North Carolina and accepted a teaching position with the NC State University Department of English. She lived in Raleigh for the rest of her life. After eight years at NC State, she taught English and technical writing at Durham Technical Institute in Durham, N.C., before retiring in 2005.

As one might expect from an English teacher, Rita was an avid reader. She was an active member of the BookWorms, a Raleigh book club made up of like-minded lovers of literature and the printed word. Her literary interests were diverse, from mysteries to modern literature. She was especially fond of British mysteries and modern novels. Rita had her quirks as a reader. If she came upon a series of books she enjoyed, she would insist on reading the entire series in the order in which it was written. The late Sue Grafton can be rest assured that Rita read every word of the Kinsey Millhone detective series in the correct chronological order, from start to finish.

While Rita was never especially enthusiastic about her own writing, she wrote in an easy-to-read, literate style. A member of the Women Write journal group, she wrote several

outstanding, creative entries for the group's monthly meetings but always felt outdone by the other members of the group. The other members, by the way, did not necessarily feel the same way.

Towards the end of her time at Durham Tech, Rita began working as a volunteer with the Friends Of The North Carolina Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and stayed with the Friends for 16 years. As she did more and more work for the Friends of the Library, they gave her more and more responsibilities. By the time she stepped down because of health reasons in 2016, she was their de facto treasurer, a job for which she had no professional training but handled flawlessly.

Those who knew Rita for very long knew that she was something of a medical marvel. She survived decades of serious and often fatal illnesses. She was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 1984. That diagnosis was upgraded to stage 4 cancer in 1989. In the end, she was a 35-year cancer survivor and a 30-year stage-4 cancer survivor. Both figures are almost unheard of. Rita was always quick to credit Dr. Mark Graham and his staff at Waverly Hematology & Oncology in Cary, N.C. for their role in her ongoing and seemingly unlikely survival.

Her favorite adjective for the people at Waverly was "brilliant." She used it frequently and lovingly. And accurately. And she used it about all of them. She loved each and every one of them for all they did for her over the years.

In addition to the decades of surgeries and cancer treatments, Rita endured other medical hardships. In particular, she underwent a complex spinal fusion operation in February 2016. Recovery from that surgery was extensive and time consuming. In July 2018 she had surgery to repair a fractured hip, another complicated operation.

While she seemed indestructible in many ways, Rita's years of medical battles took their toll. In the hospital for a routine blood transfusion on March 19, 2019 Rita lost consciousness and died quickly and unexpectedly. Cause of death was natural causes, the natural causes being the multitude of afflictions that beset her over the years.

Rita is survived by Bruce Winkworth, her loving and adoring husband of 32 years; brother,s John and David Layden of Indianapolis, Ind.; sisters, Mary Anne Layden of Philadelphia and Marcia Fisher of Cary, N.C.; and a boatload of nieces, nephews and their offspring.

A memorial service for Rita will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 30, 2019 at the

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh, located at 3313 Wade Avenue, Raleigh, NC.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Friends Of The North Carolina Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped are encouraged. Those checks may be made out to FNCLBPH and mailed to:

FNCLBPH

1841 Capital Blvd

Raleigh NC 27635

Events

MAR **Memorial Service** 11:00AM

30

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh
3313 Wade Ave, Raleigh, NC, US

Comments



“ One of my fondest memories of being at the College Baseball World Series in Omaha is a morning when Rita, Bruce and I walked down to an off-the-beaten-path diner they had discovered for breakfast. Great conversation, and a wonderful time. My thoughts and deepest condolences are with Bruce and her other family members - a truly special woman!

Steve Phillips

Steve W Phillips - March 29 at 07:59 AM



“ Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Rita Buhr.



March 28 at 08:40 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Rita Buhr.



March 28 at 04:07 PM



“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



Renaissance Funeral Home - March 20 at 10:28 AM